

Special Programs

Special Employment

Postdoctoral
Programs**PURPOSE:**

- .01 The Postdoctoral program provides a means of advancing knowledge in the areas of basic and applied research and of strengthening our national scientific and technical capabilities. Appointees provide valuable stimulus to the research efforts of Laboratory staff, make available the most recent developments of university departments, and form communication links between the Laboratory and educational centers.
- .02 Postdoctoral appointees should derive significant professional accomplishment and advancement of their career goals from their appointments. Sponsors must ensure that research begun by a Postdoctoral appointee has the potential of being published during the appointment and must encourage appointees to publish the results of their work, participate in scientific and technical conferences, and give seminars on research results during the appointment.

CATEGORIES:**Postdoctoral Fellows**

- .03 Postdoctoral Fellows are recent doctoral degree recipients who are provided the opportunity to pursue independent research programs of their own choice, to collaborate with Laboratory scientists and engineers, and to have access to Laboratory expertise, facilities, and programs. Candidates with extraordinary qualifications may be appointed as J. Robert Oppenheimer (JRO) Fellows.

**Postdoctoral Research
Associates**

- .04 Postdoctoral Research Associates are recent doctoral degree recipients who are provided the opportunity to pursue research directly involved with Laboratory programmatic efforts. The Laboratory sponsor and Research Associate are encouraged to devise a project that compliments, extends, and strengthens programmatic goals.

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Inappropriate Assignments	.05	The spirit of the program makes it inappropriate to ask Postdoctoral appointees to perform work that does not broaden their education, training, or individual scientific research experience.
DURATION OF APPOINTMENTS:	.06	<p>Postdoctoral appointments are initially 2-year limited-term appointments, except for JRO appointments, which are for 3 years. At the request of the sponsoring organization, an appointment may be extended for a third year. Postdoctoral appointments other than JRO Fellows, may be extended only as Postdoctoral Research Associate appointments if programmatic funding is available. The sponsoring organization must contact the Staffing Group in the Human Resources Division before the end of the second year to request an extension. ✂</p> <p>NOTE: Postdoctoral appointees can be terminated early for poor performance or other reasons according to the provisions of AM 113, Terminations.</p>
Short-Term Extension	.07	After the third-year appointment expires, the Postdoctoral Committee (<i>see</i> .23-.27) may grant a short-term extension, not to exceed 3 months, in extenuating circumstances. The sponsoring division requests the short-term extension through the Staffing Group. The request should explain the extenuating circumstances.
FUNDING:		
Postdoctoral Fellows	.08	Postdoctoral Fellows are financed by indirect funding. The program will support salary, benefits, travel, materials and supplies, and a surcharge to support the administration of the program. The number of positions in the program is determined by the funding that the Director allocates to it.
Postdoctoral Research Associates	.09	Postdoctoral Research Associates are financed by programmatic funding. The sponsoring organization must allocate program funds to cover the cost of salary, benefits, incoming travel,

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supplies, services, and a surcharge to support the administrative costs of the program for the duration of the appointment.

APPOINTEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

Salary

- .10 The Staffing Group establishes the salary structure for the Postdoctoral program based on market data and the Science and Technology Base Program Director (STBPD) approves any changes. The offer salary is based on the date the candidate completed the requirements for his or her Ph.D. Salary increases are given on the anniversary of this date as well as when the salary schedule is adjusted. Appointees automatically receive increases according to this schedule. The Staffing Group processes scheduled increases.

Benefits

- .11 Postdoctoral appointees accrue vacation and sick leave, receive holiday pay, and are reimbursed for incoming travel and moving expenses. Appointees are required to join the University of California Retirement Plan. *For benefits information, see [AM 501](#), [Benefits Programs](#), and [AM 1100.II](#). [Laboratory Special Employee Benefits](#).*

RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES:

Recruitment

- .12 The Staffing Group publicizes the programs through announcements at career fairs and university campuses and advertisements in technical journals. The program is also publicized through informal contacts between Laboratory staff and their colleagues, and publicity at conferences. Groups and divisions that want to attract Postdoctoral candidates in a specific subject area may use the services of the Staffing Group or conduct their own recruitment efforts after consultation with the Staffing Group. Recruitment and employment procedures must be consistent with the Laboratory's stated policies on nondiscrimination, affirmative action, and equal

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employment opportunity. See [AM 101](#), *Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action*. Selection must be based primarily on the individual's technical competence and academic achievements.

Applications

- .13 A monthly listing of postdoctoral applicants is available through the Human Resources Home Page on the World Wide Web. ✂ Applicants for regular employment may also be considered for Postdoctoral appointments.

Inquiries

- .14 Employees who receive inquiries about the Postdoctoral program may either respond directly or may forward inquiries to the Staffing Group.

QUALIFICATIONS OF CANDIDATES:

Background and Abilities

- .15 Postdoctoral candidates are evaluated on their academic background, references, accomplishments, and demonstrated capacity for research activity. Candidates with superior qualifications who show promise of becoming outstanding leaders in their fields may be considered for Postdoctoral Fellow appointments. ✂

Eligibility

- .16 Candidates ordinarily must have received their doctoral degrees no more than 3 years before they are considered by the Postdoctoral Committee; however, this limitation may be relaxed by the Committee if approval would be of substantial benefit to both the candidate and the Laboratory.
- EXCEPTION:** Candidates for appointment as JRO Fellows may be considered for up to 5 years after the date they received their doctoral degrees.
- .17 The appointment may be made before the actual conferral of the doctoral degree, provided the candidate has a reasonable expectation of completing all requirements for the degree before the anticipated date of hire. Before the date of hire, the appointee must supply a statement from

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the conferring university verifying that he or she has met all degree requirements.

Limitations	.18	Individuals who conducted a significant portion of their doctoral thesis research at the Laboratory are usually ineligible for Postdoctoral appointments. The Postdoctoral Committee reviews exceptional cases, considering such factors as length of graduate residence at the Laboratory and the extent to which thesis research direction was provided by Laboratory employees. Substantial changes in research topic or in Laboratory advisors are considered by the Postdoctoral Committee as possible mitigating factors in special cases. This policy ensures that the Postdoctoral program significantly broadens the experience and outlook of the candidate.
Security Clearance	.19	The sponsoring organization requests a Department of Energy (DOE) Access Authorization (Q or L clearance), if required, for appointees who are U.S. citizens.
Non-U.S. Citizen	.20	When a candidate is not a U.S. citizen, the sponsor must confirm in the proposal that the candidate's proposed research at the Laboratory will not be adversely affected by the lack of access to classified material and facilities in classified areas.
	.21	DOE approval is required for all non-U.S. citizens to work at the Laboratory. The sponsoring organization initiates the approval request at the time the appointment is approved. Appointees must also have the appropriate visa and work permit before beginning work or receiving payments, including travel reimbursements, from the Laboratory. See AM 1213 , <i>Visas</i> .
WORK SITES OTHER THAN LOS ALAMOS:	.22	Normally, a Postdoctoral appointee's tenure is spent at the Laboratory. Exceptions involving the use of unique national or international research facilities or other special circumstances requiring extended absence from the Laboratory or assignment to a duty station other than Los Alamos must be considered by the Postdoctoral Committee.

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If extended absence or an alternate duty station is anticipated, the sponsors must detail the circumstances in the proposal.

- SELECTION PROCEDURES:** .23 Any Technical Staff Member may, with the endorsement of the group- and division-level managers, sponsor a Postdoctoral candidate. The sponsor must submit a written proposal in support of the candidate for review by the Postdoctoral Committee. Postdoctoral appointments are approved by the Director, based on the recommendations of the STBPD and the Postdoctoral Committee.
- Committee Representation** .24 The membership of the Postdoctoral Committee represents all technical divisions and disciplines and the competencies of each division.
- Ombudsman** .25 Each member of the Postdoctoral Committee serves as the Ombudsman for his or her division, representing the postdoctoral appointees and the disciplines or technical specialties of the organization. The Ombudsman provides expertise in evaluating candidates and advises and counsels Postdoctoral appointees on technical or career issues or problems that arise during the appointment.
- Committee Meetings** .26 The committee meets quarterly to consider proposals of candidates for Postdoctoral Fellow appointments. ✂
- NOTE:** Proposals for Postdoctoral Research Associates are considered throughout the year.
- Recommendations** .27 Following the meeting of the full Committee, the Postdoctoral Committee Chair sends written recommendations to the STBPD, who transmits them along with his or her recommendations to the Director. ✂
- Personnel Actions** .28 After the appointments have been approved, the Staffing Group notifies the sponsoring organization

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of the decisions and advises them to prepare the appropriate Personnel Action form (PA) and the Training and Testing Requirements Form.

- .29 The Staffing Group initiates employment offers after the PA has been received.

Unfavorable Recommendations

- .30 If the Committee's recommendation is unfavorable to the candidate, the sponsor or the division-level manager of the sponsoring organization may appeal to the STBPD (through the Staffing Group). The appeal should be delivered to the Staffing Group within 2 weeks of the date the sponsoring division is notified of the Committee's recommendations. The appeal may proceed even if the STBPD and the Director have already approved the recommendations of the Committee. If the appeal is denied, a candidate may be proposed for reconsideration at a later date if the individual's qualifications change significantly.

Reporting Date

- .31 The appointee's reporting date must be no later than 9 months after the meeting at which the appointment was approved. An extension must be approved by the Postdoctoral Committee or the offer lapses. The sponsoring division may then resubmit the proposal with a later reporting date.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS:

- .32 Supervisors complete performance appraisals for Postdoctoral appointees annually according to the provisions of [AM 109](#), Performance Assessments..

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Sponsoring Organization

- .33 The sponsoring organization is responsible for guiding the appointee's research and for general administrative matters such as attendance reporting, performance assessments, and required authorizations. The organization is also responsible for ensuring the appropriateness of the work assignment.

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- The Staffing Group** .34 The Staffing Group is responsible for administering the Postdoctoral program and for developing procedures. ✂ The Immigration Services Section of the Staffing Group assists with visas and work permits for appointees who are foreign nationals. See [AM 1213](#), *Visas*.
- STBPD** .35 STBPD is responsible for overseeing the Postdoctoral program to ensure that it meets the needs of the Laboratory. STBPD is also responsible for reviewing the recommendations of the Postdoctoral Committee and for interacting with the Director on matters involving the postdoctoral program, including approvals of appointments.
- CHANGE FROM POSTDOCTORAL STATUS:** .36 Postdoctoral appointees who have completed the first year of their appointments are considered internal candidates for available positions and may be converted to regular or limited-term employment without advertising. However, for appointees offered a Postdoctoral appointment after February 1, 1994, conversion to regular appointments requires the hiring division to use one of its external allocations. Appointees are normally not converted until they have completed the second year of their appointments.
- .37 Appointees who are interested in converting to regular or limited-term employment should submit a current résumé, publication list, and statement of research interests to the Staffing Group. The Staffing Group will make the information available to interested hiring officials